The Connecticut Historical Society

LLETIN *Volume 19, Number 3 July 1954*

A unique Revolutionary caricature, "The Contrast"

See article British Prisoners of War in Hartford During the Revolution, pages 65-81.

Published by
The Connecticut Historical Society
1 Elizabeth Street
HARTFORD 5, CONNECTICUT

The Society assumes no responsibility for statements by contributors.

Issued Quarterly *Price Fifty Cents*

Table of Contents

British Prisoners of War in Hartford During the Revolution
by Herbert H. White 65

News of the Society 81

Industry in an Agrarian Economy, Early Eighteenth Century Connecticut
by Glenn Weaver 82

"Rude and Prophane Behavior" in the Litchfield Meeting House in 1764
by Kenneth Scott 93

Recent Acquisitions 95

Connecticut Historical Society
BULLETIN

Volume 19 Hartford, July 1954 Number 3

British Prisoners of War in Hartford during the Revolution

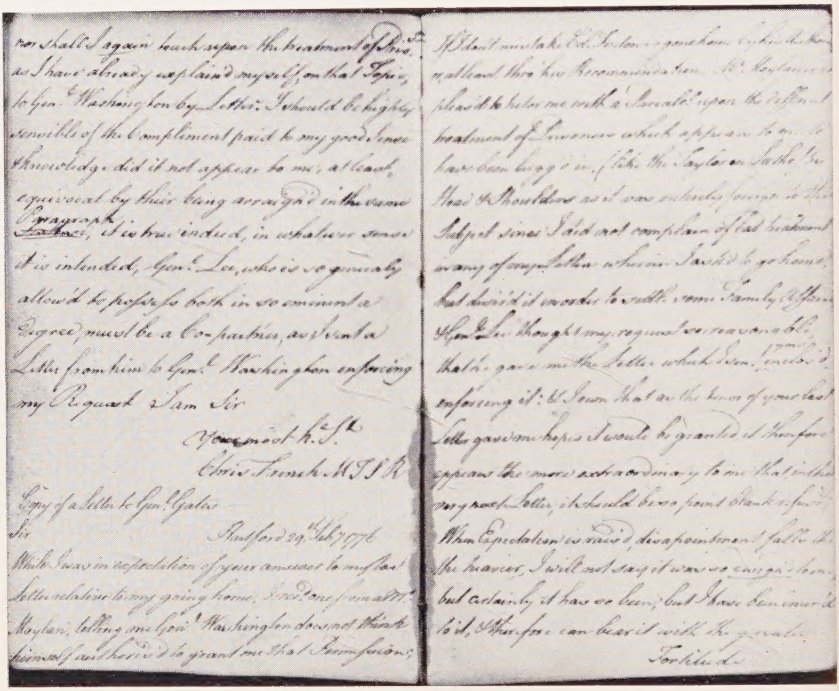
by HERBERT H. WHITE*

Hartford, by reason of its inland location, was not particularly exposed to attack, either by sea or land. Nor was it an important strategic point. But these were not the only reasons for its comparative security throughout the War for Independence. In character its people, from the earliest settlement, have been daring yet discreet, determined yet diplomatic. These are traits that make for peace and prosperity, and although in its history, it has faced local crises or shared in widespread events of war, disaster or political revolution, it has remained unmolested, peaceful, and prosperous. During the period of the American Revolution, it was never entered by the enemy other than as prisoner, spy, or ambassador. Moreover, its loyalty to the cause, the ardor of its patriots, its generous aid in men and money, and the presence of such influential men as Governor Trumbull, Col. Wadsworth, Silas Deane, and others, brought it into prominence early in the War.

These considerations undoubtedly account, in a measure at least, for its selection as one of the important places for the consignment and safe keeping of captured prisoners and suspected or known loyalists. Other Colonies bore their share of responsibility and burden, but I think Connecticut held a position of great importance in this work. The Continental Congress at Philadelphia regulated the disposal of prisoners. Many prominent prisoners were sent to Hartford as the General Assembly was often in session here with Governor Trumbull. Some were placed in other towns, but all were more or less directly under the care of the local Committee of Safety. The surprise and capture of Fort Ticonderoga, only three weeks after the battle of Lexington, was planned in Hartford and financed mostly by Hartford County men.

We learn through Trumbull's *History of Hartford County* that "they borrowed money from the Colonial Treasury to defray the expense, giving their individual obligations with security. Their proceedings were carried on ostensibly without the knowledge of the Assembly, then in session, and

* Herbert Humphrey White was born in Hartford July 3, 1858, the son of Francis A. and Cornelia A. (Humphrey) White. He was Treasurer of The Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company and held many other positions of trust. He was a member of the Society from January 5, 1897 until his death January 6, 1934. His article was read before the Society December 2, 1913.



Extract from Major Christopher French's Journal No. 2, kept while a prisoner in Hartford January to September, 1776

a committee was appointed to complete the arrangements for this daring project. This committee selected sixteen men from Connecticut, who went to Pittsfield, where Colonel James Easton of that town, a native of Hartford, joined them with forty men from Berkshire County. At Bennington they were reinforced by one hundred men, and Colonel Ethan Allen, born and raised in Connecticut, took command of the expedition. The result of the attack is well known, but the initiative taken by Connecticut has not always been recognized. At the same time that Ticonderoga was taken, was captured also Major Skene of Skenesborough, a prominent loyalist, with several members of his family. They were sent to Hartford with Captain Delaplace, the commander at Ticonderoga, and other officers. The remaining prisoners, forty-seven in number, came later, under the escort of Mr. Epaphras Bull."

Captures from the enemy soon began to be frequent and numerous. *The Connecticut Courant* of August 5, 1775, reports three Tory prisoners brought last Saturday from New Canaan and committed to jail. August 26, "A number of gentlemen were brought to this town from New York, where they were lately taken up on suspicion of entertaining sentiments unfriendly to the American States." The fate of the Ticonderoga prisoners may have furnished General Washington a suggestion regarding the disposal of some of the more prominent persons captured, whom he thought should be kept safely and treated humanely, because, at this time, by his orders, came also

Major Christopher French and four others of his party, arrested at Gloucester, Massachusetts shortly before.

The following is a copy of the minutes of the Connecticut Committee of Safety, September 14, 1775.

> "At a meeting of the Governors &c present — The Gov. laid before us a request and desire of the Hon. General Assembly of the Massachusetts Bay, communicated by the Hon. James Otis, President of the Council representing that their jails are generally crowded with prisoners, etc. and moving for liberty to send some of their prisoners into this Colony. And in consideration of the circumstances in this case, it is agreed and resolved that, altho we have many prisoners from the Northward, and much burdened in many ways, and are very greatly in advance, yet, from our great affection for the common cause, this Board do not refuse to receive some of the prisoners referred to, but depend that said Assembly will also apply to R. I. and N. H. Assemblies or Conventions for the same purpose and send as sparingly as may be; and those who may be sent in pursuance of this license shall be received in the Counties of Hartford and Windham for the present and until this Council shall determine otherwise."

In November, Gov. Trumbull informed the Continental Congress that "Major Gen. Schuyler hath lately sent prisoners taken at La Prairie or thereabout and by his letter of Oct. 27th ult., informs me that he intendeth to order the officers and soldiers, with women and children, in all nearly 200, taken at Chambly, into this Colony under my direction."

From the *Courant* August 12, 1775, we read of the arrival of a new batch of Tories, between twenty and thirty, and it adds with apparent glee, "They are a motley mess."

In Stuart's *Life of Jonathan Trumbull Sen.,* we find that—"The War of course, throughout the year 1777, continued to bring its prisoners into Connecticut to be placed under the general and often the special custody of Trumbull, and they were about as numerous this year as usual. In January for example, he received twenty British officers and soldiers who arrived in Hartford from the Westward—and at the same time, a party of 160 more, part of the 300 taken at Princeton, were on their way to Hartford."

In late May 1777, Col. Meigs left Sachems Head, Connecticut at 1:00 P. M. with 160 men, including officers. About one o'clock the next morning they landed within three miles of Sag Harbor, where there were a number of recruits to the British Army in barracks; also ships and stores. They attacked the enemy at once in a bayonet charge, while a small detachment under Capt. Troop took possession of the wharves and the vessels lying there. The only spirited opposition came from an armed schooner of twelve guns, which lay within 150 yards of the wharves. Notwithstanding, the party burnt all the vessels at the wharf, killed or captured all on board, destroyed 100 tons of hay, large quantities of grain, 10 hogsheads of rum, and other West India goods and secured all the soldiers stationed there, about ninety in number. The Americans maintained perfect order and exhibited remarkable bravery and lost not one man, either killed or wounded. Eleven vessels in all were destroyed and of the prisoners taken, about one third were seamen, who with the others, recruits, were sent to Hartford.

In September Captain Harding sent Gov. Trumbull the entire crews of the prize ship *Weymouth* and the brigantine *Honor,* taken by the *Oliver Cromwell.* In October another party of 30 and still another of 20 were sent from New York. And again in the same month 15 more arrived, who

had been taken in an assault upon an armed schooner in the North River—and 120 British soldiers, together with 5 Hessian officers, who had been taken at the Northward previous to the capture of General Burgoyne. So numerous, in fact, were prisoners in Connecticut in 1777 that it became necessary to devise new places for their security. When sick from their crowded state in jail, as once in Hartford, such lodgings or barracks were provided as would prevent their sufferings.

Barracks and a yard were built in Enfield and shops, stores and other buildings at other places were either hired or impressed for their confinement.

Other prisoners brought here were Captain Williams, and Lieutenants McFarlan and Smith of the Royal Artillery, officers Gregory and Stanhope of the King's Navy, Governor William Franklin of New Jersey (a son of Benjamin) quartered just over the line in South Windsor, Governor Montfort Brown of Providence, one of the Bahama Islands, Mr. Sistare, born at Barcelona, Mayor Cuyler and party from Albany, consisting of Mr. Monier, Postmaster, Lieutenants McDonnell and Duncan, Mr. Delancy, Mr. Hilton, attorney, and Mr. Herring, Mayor Matthews of New York, transferred later to Litchfield, Captain McKay, captured at St. Johns, Peter Herron, a Tory, and Captain Jacob Smith, taken at Long Island. All these are disclosed from only a partial search of the records. Undoubtedly many more were received here during the War who, with those already mentioned, made quite a formidable company injected into the life of the little community. Their care and custody, occupation and comfort, laid a full burden of responsibility on its citizens, for we must bear in mind that in 1775 there were only 5000 people in this town that then also included within its territorial limits, West and East Hartford and Manchester.

The prisoners arrived in a more or less destitute condition, physically and financially, but all were made as comfortable as circumstances would permit, and the townspeople could afford. Some of those on parole were housed in private families, others lived at the taverns. They were allowed to go about within prescribed limits and they entered somewhat into the social life of the community. Some of the common soldiers were lodged in jail, but more were sent to Newgate Prison in Simsbury. In 1777 the prisoners from Newgate Prison were taken to the Hartford Jail and probably the Prison was not used again until 1780. At one time the prisoners were confined in the Court House, but on the 11th of October, 1776, the General Assembly ordered these prisoners to be removed to other quarters in charge of Ezekiel Williams, Commissary of Prisoners (Sheriff).

To the townspeople, the coming of the first captives must have been a great event. They had seen the companies of Patriots, some of their own kinsmen, march forth to war, and had learned from letters and the occasional newspaper reports, of far distant skirmishes and battles. But here was a sight of the enemy face to face, comparatively harmless to be sure, in his present condition, but the real thing nevertheless. They must have met hostile eyes as they walked about, and sometimes have heard uncomplimentary, perhaps insulting remarks about themselves or their king. They in turn looked down on the populace as country bumpkins, rude and coarse, base traitors to the government of His Glorious Majesty, George the Third. But there were gentle people among both victors and vanquished and many evidences of warm-hearted courtesy were shown on both sides. In contrast with the busy

bustling life of our town today, it is interesting to look back to the simple village life of a century and a third ago, its quietness disturbed by the excitement and alarm incident to the great struggle then in progress. Human nature was much the same as it is today; violent passion and hatred, exultant, boisterous nagging and teasing by the boys, suspicion and watchfulness, obstinacy and misunderstanding on the part of the elders, gentleness and warm sympathy at times by all.

The citizens who lodged and boarded these unfortunates could not be expected to bear the expense personally, nor were the prisoners on parole at all backward in asking for pocket money and other essentials. For instance, Major French demanded a daily allowance of 17s6d for himself and the gentlemen with him.

The whole question was brought before the General Assembly at its May Session, at which a committee was appointed to take the matter in charge, but it is evident from the following Act of the same body, passed in October 1775, that if anything had already been done, it was insufficient to the needs of the occasion.

> "Whereas this Assembly at their session in May last appointed Col. Wolcott, Capt. Samuel Wadsworth, Capt. Ezek. Williams, Mr. Epaphras Bull, Henry Allyn Esq., Col. Fisher Gay, Col. Matthew Talcott, Col. Jas. Wadsworth, Capt. Jona Wells, Ebenezer White, Esq., and Col. Jonathan Humphrey, a Com. with instructions, at the expense of this Colony, to take care of and provide for a number of officers and soldiers with their families etc., who were then prisoners of war in the town of Hartford, and this assembly being informed that such prisoners are now in this Colony and no provision is made for their confinement and support, therefore resolved that the Com. aforesaid be empowered and they are hereby fully authorized to take care of and provide for all such prisoners as are or shall be ordered and directed to this Colony by authority in the same manner as in said Act they are directed."

The townspeople and others who had made advances in caring for the prisoners were afterwards reimbursed, as we learn in the account of the General Expenses of Connecticut for taking Ticonderoga, rendered by the Committee in November 1775. In this account are found the payments to:

Ely Warner, jailor	£ 22–13–6	
Jennet Collier, tavern	12– 0–0	
	31– 0–5	
John Haynes Lord	10–15–0	
	17– 9–0	
E. Williams, Sheriff & Com.	51–14–0	
	65– 0–0	
Patrick Thomas	1– 5–0	211–16–11
For boarding and providing for the prisoners:		
Doctor Tidmarsh	5– 6–0	
Dan'l Butler	4– 9–8	
E. Fish	1–12–0	
Cheeney	10– 0–0	
Asa Yale	19–3	22– 6–11

For doctoring, medicines and dieting sick prisoners:
Stephen Turner 4–16–0

Providing for and tending sick prisoners:
Uriah Burkett 0– 6–6

Digging grave for a prisoner (John McKnell, who died June 17, 1776.)

In 1776 Epaphras Bull was appointed Commissary of the prisoners of war in this State, to observe all the orders of the General Assembly and the Continental Congress, and to make monthly returns of the conditions of said prisoners to the Board of War appointed by Congress. This action probably settled the matter satisfactorily, as no complaints of any consequence were afterwards made.

We may readily imagine that the prisoners, especially the officers, who chafed under their paroles, were continually seeking to enlarge their liberties and kept the Committee of Safety and other officials busy passing on their various requests and complaints. In October, Major French preferred a request to Gov. Trumbull for permission to be removed to Middletown, "together with the gentlemen with him, who are of the same persuasion," in order that they might "worship according to the Church of England in which he was educated." The request was refused because, in Middletown, was greater opportunity for escape, but they were told they could worship at Simsbury, where was an Episcopal Seminary. The change to Simsbury was unwise, as we shall see later. They were, however, allowed sometimes to walk to Middletown to Church on condition of returning the same day.

Social life between citizens and prisoners did not always run smoothly. Sometimes the prisoners were suspected of hostile designs or violations of parole, which they hotly denied. They often treated the citizens with superior disdain, and it is not surprising that minor broils and outbreaks occurred. When the Colonial Arms suffered reverses, and their fortunes of war were at a low ebb, as surely they were at times, the prisoners became jubilant and insolent. Their boundaries would then be curtailed and they would be put into jail for safe keeping. In fact some escaped, by the aid of disloyal Americans; were recaptured, escaped again, and gave no end of trouble. Perhaps short sketches of a few of the more prominent, may shed a little light on the times and manners of this stirring period.

As already noted, among the captured at Ticonderoga, was Major Andrew P. Skene (son of Governor Skene), his aunt, two sisters, and Mr. Brook, who was looked upon as a bigger enemy to his country than Maj. Skene. The Major immediately petitioned the General Assembly for permission for himself and family to return to Skenesborough or to have someone care for his property there. The ladies were soon released and sent to Quebec under escort of Capt. John Bigelow, whose expenses, 150 pounds, were repaid by the General Assembly. Maj. Skene was held longer, but was afterwards exchanged for Jemmy Lovell, a classmate of Gov. Trumbull, and later delegate to the Continental Congress. The elder Skene figured quite prominently here for a time. I find a short sketch of him in Jones's *History of New York in the Revolution.*

> "Col. Philip Skene, or Gov. Skene, as he was called after his appointment as 'Lt. Gov. of Ticonderoga and Crown Point and Surveyor of His Majesty's woods and forests bordering on Lake Champlain', was a Scotchman whose wife was a

descendant of the famous William Wallace. He was born about 1720, entered the British army at age 19, came to America in 1756 in the French War, was at the repulse of Ticonderoga under Lord Howe, and in 1759, was in command of Crown Point. In 1763 he went to England, got an order from the King for a grant of land, returned in 1765, from New York obtained a patent for a tract of 25,000 acres embracing a settlement, which he named Skenesborough. In 1788 that name was changed to Whitehall, its present appellation. While he was absent in England in 1775, Ticonderoga was captured and his family brought to Hartford as prisoners." He returned to Philadelphia in June 1775 and was immediately arrested by order of the Continental Congress as a "dangerous partisan of administration", was consigned on parole to Gov. Trumbull of Connecticut and so remained until his exchange in 1776.

He joined Burgoyne's expedition in 1777 and surrendered with it at Saratoga Oct. 7, 1777. He was one of Burgoyne's advisers and was said to be the person who advised him to proceed direct to Fort Edward in preference to the route by Ticonderoga and Lake George. This insured the construction of a good road through his domains and united the waters of Lake Champlain with those of the Hudson. King George Third, however, in remarking on the plan of campaign, advised the Lake George route, saying, "If possible, possession must be taken of Lake George and nothing but an absolute impossibility of succeeding in this can be the excuse for proceeding by South Bay and Skenesborough".

Thus the canny Scot, though openly loyal to His Gracious Majesty, sought to enrich himself without personal expense by the opportune use of the King's soldiers. The arduous work delayed and weakened Burgoyne's Army so greatly as to become no small factor in its later disaster.

During his sojourn in Hartford, Governor Skene was not popular, as the *Courant* October 16, 1775 would indicate by this item of news:

> "It is reported that General Washington a few days ago sent in a Flag of Truce to Boston, proposing the exchange of prisoners. Maj. French for Col. Parker, Lt. Knight of the Navy for Capt. Scott and His Excellency *Gov.* Skene for *Corporal* Guile of Capt. Doude's Co. of riflemen. The two former were accepted with readiness, but the last exchange, General Gage rejected with scorn as an insult to his understanding, so that in all probability we shall have the honor of His Excellency, Gov. Skene's residence among us—God knows how long."

It is, however, from the diary of Major French, left behind when he escaped in December, 1776, that we are able to cull information concerning the life and feeling among the townspeople and their treatment of prisoners. The *Courant* from time to time, however, gives us another side of the picture.

Major French appears to have been a middle-aged, sentimental Irish gentleman, small in stature, of considerable refinement and culture, ardent in his loyalty to his King, somewhat hot-headed at times, assuming military and paternal command over other officers imprisoned here, insistent on his rights, obstinate to an unnecessary degree, a genial companion among his equals and warm-hearted and sympathetic with those in trouble. His diary begins January 1, 1776, about eight months after his capture and four months after his arrival here.

He and four others, Ensign Rotton, Terence McDermott, Volunteer, and Goldthorp and Allen, Privates, arrived at Gloucester, having sailed from Cork early in 1775. They brought a quantity of clothing intended for General Gage's Army in Boston, but were arrested as they landed and sent to the Committee of Safety at Philadelphia, who, having obtained their paroles, ordered them transferred to General Washington at Cambridge. They set out under escort of Capt. Webb, Aid to General Putnam. The Committee of Safety probably had in mind the possibility of an exchange for one or

more of the Patriots imprisoned in Boston. General Gage, however, rejected all proposals and French was then consigned to Hartford. His parole read as follows:

> "Christopher French, Major of His Majesty's 22d Regiment of Foot, a prisoner in the power of the Com. of Safety for the Province of Pa., and being kindly treated and protected by them and enlarged on parole, do hereby solemnly promise and engage, on the honor of a soldier and a gentleman, that I will not bear arms against the American United Colonies in any manner whatever for the space of twelve months, or until I may be exchanged; nor will I during that time, take any measures to give intelligence to General Gage or the British Ministry or to any person or persons whatever, relative to American affairs, but will proceed with all convenient expedition to General Washington and submit myself to his further directions; and that I will not directly or indirectly attempt to procure any person or persons whatever to rescue me, and that I will not go on board any British ship of war during the continuance of my engagement not to bear arms."

His exchange, apparently acceptable in October, 1775, as above noted, was not made, and he therefore remained in Hartford an unwilling prisoner for seventeen months. French soon got into trouble with the authorities on the question of wearing his sword and on some other matters. The dispute became so heated as to call forth letters to Gen. Washington from both the Committee of Safety and the haughty Major. Washington's answer shows that nobility of character so justly attributed to him. It read as follows:

> "Gentlemen: Your favor of the 18th instant and one from Maj. French on the same subject have come safely to our hand. From the general character of this gentleman and the acknowledged politeness and attention of the Com. of Hartford to the gentlemen entrusted to their care, I flatter myself there would have been a mutual emulation of civility, which would have resulted in the ease and convenience of both. I am extremely sorry to find it otherwise. Upon re-perusal of former letters respecting this gentleman, I cannot think there is anything particular in their situation which can challenge a distinction. If the circumstances of wearing their swords had created no dissatisfaction I should not have interfered, considering it in itself a matter of indifference. But as it has given offence, partly perhaps by the inadvertent expressions which have been dropped on this occasion, I persuade myself that Maj. French, for the sake of his own convenience and ease and to save me farther trouble, will concede to what is not essential either to his comfort or happiness farther than mere opinion makes it so. On the other hand, allow me to recommend a gentleness even to forbearance with persons so entirely in our power. We know not what the chance of war may be, but let it be what it will, the duties of humanity and kindness will demand from us such a treatment as we should expect from others, the case being reversed. I am, gentlemen, your very obedient and most humble servant, George Washington."

About the time French begins his diary, he spent an evening with Gen. Charles Lee, an American soldier of unpleasant memory, who spent several days in Hartford in January 1776. Washington had ordered Lee to proceed from Cambridge to Connecticut to recruit fresh troops and to march to the vicinity of New York to watch and intercept Gen. Clinton, should he try to disembark his army. French persuaded Lee to write a letter to General Washington to grant him liberty to go to Ireland on his parole, but Washington, February 10, 1776, declined to grant the request, rebuked French for making it and suggested that he "compare his situation with gentlemen of ours, who by the fortunes of war, have fallen into the hands of their enemies. What has been their treatment? Thrown into loathsome prison and afterwards sent in irons to England—and then say whether he has cause to repine his fate." Washington probably was referring to Ethan Allen's fate.

In French's diary May 10, we find the following letter to General Lee, which, though somewhat involved in one or two sentences, exhibits a delicious sense of flattery and sarcasm:

> "Sir: No doubt you remember that when you passed through this place in Jan. last, you made a bet of ten guineas with me that Quebec would be taken by the Provincials in the course of the current winter. That event has not happened (nor is there now the least prospect that it ever will, as there are accounts, not only of its having been re-inforced by a part of His Majesty's fleet and a large body of his troops, but that his Excellency, General Carlton has drove them entirely from before it) and indeed your own papers, unaccustomed as they are to communicate to the public anything which argues against their successes, have lately inserted some very desponding letters from that quarter; they also regret that you was not sent to command them, and though, as you are become our enemy, I cannot be so gross as to wish you had with success, yet I am not so much yours as to envy you the honor you might have acquired by a well-concerted retreat which, though you might not have effected, yet I know you would have attempted, a circumstance which, from your being at the head of raw and undiciplined forces, could only have added to the brilliancy of your measures. You will please direct Mr. Lawrence, Treasurer here to pay me, which will much oblige, Sir, Yours most etc. C. F."

Peculiar interest attaches to this letter in the exhibit of the craven spirit of Lee under the keen insight of Major French. If we lay the letter alongside the record of Lee's behavior at Monmouth more than two years later, the characterization appears almost prophetic. Lee in charge of the advance column, under specific orders from Washington to attack, reached a position from which it could be made with every promise of brilliant success. Suddenly, without apparent reason, he ordered (attempted) "a well concerted retreat" which "he did not effect" wholly because the quickwitted Lafayette, realizing the significance of the movement, informed Washington, who immediately hurried to the front, deposed the cowardly Lee from his command, restored order and spirit to the soldiers, and saved the day. Washington's anger was probably never stronger nor more thoroughly justified than on this occasion. It is to be regretted that the Patriots did not discern Gen. Lee's character as readily as did Major French.

The defeat of General Montgomery at Quebec in December, became known in Hartford about the middle of January, 1776. It stirred the populace to wild excitement and they looked for any excuse for expressing their rage and resentment. Major French describes in his diary, a lively and somewhat thrilling experience with a small band of Patriots.

> "Tuesday, 16 January, '76. An account came of the defeat of Gen'l Montgomery at Quebec on the 31st of December, between the hours of four and six in the morning, in which he was killed and his Second in Command (Arnold) wounded, etc. This day we all, viz. Capt. McKay, Messrs. Rotton and McDermott, and I went, according to a prior agreement, to dine with Gov. Skene, who is a prisoner of war in the West Division, five miles from us, in a sled. Capt. McKay drove us, and as is customary, hallooed a good deal to the horses, which we did not conceive could give umbrage or have any bad consequences.
>
> "In the evening whilst we were playing at whist for our amusement, we were informed that upwards of 20 men were assembled at a house immediately opposite to us, who were determined to attack us because they said we were come there to make merry and rejoice at their misfortune at Quebec. We retired to an upper room, in number five, (viz. Gov. Skene, Capt. McKay, and his servant, Ensign Rotton, and I. McDermott had returned to town upon some business or amusement of his own) determined to defend ourselves to the last and to die rather than be insulted. We sent a negro man, (presumably Gov. Skene's slave)

to the house to find out what was doing, who soon returned and told us the Capt. of the Militia (one Sedgwick) was endeavoring to persuade them to desist, and that he believed he would succeed. In a short time the woman of the house (who was greatly frightened) went out and at her return told us they had dispersed". Thus ended this affair happily without bloodshed, but it seems the infection spread, for on "Wednesday 17th January, four of the Committee came to us and told us that thirty or forty of the populace at Hartford had assembled with a resolution to come out and insult us and had gone so far as to say that if they, the Committee, did not do their duty, they would. They proposed that we should return to Hartford to quiet the minds of the people, to which we readily consented, telling them we should be sorry to be the occasion of any commotion. Three people came on horseback to meet us and turned back as if to escort us in triumph. Last night a paper was fixed up at the meeting house door and another at the State House, the words of which were taken from the 4th verse of the 58th Chapter of Isaiah, viz. "Behold ye fast for strife and debate and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Ye shall not fast as ye do this day to make your voice to be heard on high". (note): This was a Fast Day by order of the Provincial Assembly). "This was imputed to us, and they said McDermott, who, as has been observed, came in that night, was sent in to put the papers up. I should have observed that Capt. McKay's calling to the horses was interpreted into shouts of triumph for their defeat".

We have all heard of the custom of the negroes of Connecticut in Colonial days, of electing one of their own race as Governor over them. This occurrence was so unusual to a stranger like French, that he makes note of it, referring also to that annual event of former Connecticut life that, even as late as my own boyhood time, was called "Election Day." In his diary, 9th May, we read, "The election of a governor etc. came on when the old one [Trumbull] was re-elected; he marched in great state, escorted by his guards in scarlet turned up with black, to the State House and from thence to the meeting house." Note—[These were our own dear Foot Guard, then only five years old.]

"The next day the negroes, according to their custom, elected a governor for themselves, when John Anderson, Gov. Skene's black man was chosen. At night he gave a supper and ball to a number of his electors, who were very merry and danced till about three o'clock in the morning." [Note—This supper and ball were given at Knox's tavern, where French lived.]

The election of Gov. Skene's negro naturally created a strong suspicion of a plot on the part of the British officers here. Gov. Skene was closely questioned and his lodgings searched for any evidence, but none was found and he hotly denied the existence of any hostile move. The negro also confessed ignorance of any disloyal purpose, and declared that another negro suggested his appointment and he entered into the suggestion as a piece of diversion. It had cost him $25. As no plot was discovered, the fears of the people were dispelled.

The stir over the supposed loyalist negro plot had no more than quieted when, on the 20th of May, French writes: "The meeting and schoolhouse bells were rung before 5 o'clock this morning by one Watson, Printer [of the *Connecticut Courant*] and one Tucker in order to raise a mob to send us all to jail; they assembled accordingly and forming a committee of their own, sent them to the Town Committee, then sitting for that purpose, but were pacified by these last." The Committee in these stirring times certainly did not find life one continuous round of joy and pleasure.

The grievance of Watson and Tucker may have been due to the fact that French had tried to shield a prisoner, who was charged with speaking dis-

respectfully of the Continental Congress. He also had a spirited conversation with General Lee [when he was here], replying to the charge that Parliament was composed of a set of rascals, said that not an individual in Parliament was so great a rascal as the Continental Congress, individually and collectively. The Committee [of Patriots] were also charged by him with the intention of obliging the soldiers [prisoners] to work at building powder mills, making powder, saltpetre, arms of any sort, and casting of cannon and shot.

This the Committee, however, publicly denied and expressed the opinion that it would be unsafe to employ the prisoners in any work of this nature.

May 18th Capt. McKay broke jail and escaped, but was soon caught. We find two accounts of the event. Maj. French said "22d May Capt. McKay, who left 18th May was caught at Lanesboro, four miles from Pittsfield, Mass., brought back. He was beaten and bruised by his captors." Now from the *Courant*:

> "The infamous Capt. McKay, who is so lost to every principle of honor as to violate his parole and endeavor to make his escape, as mentioned in our last, was last Monday apprehended and taken by a number of gentlemen at Lanesborough in Berkshire County, and on Wednesday following, was safely brought to this town and lodged in the common goal. His servant, McFarland, together with a certain John Graves of Pittsfield, were likewise taken with him and both were committed to prison. Graves is an inhabitant of Pittsfield, in the province of Mass. Bay, where he has considerable property; but, being instigated by the devil and his own wicked heart, he had undertaken to pilot Capt. McKay to Albany, and had promised fresh horses at proper stages on the road, to expedite his flight. Query: What does the last mentioned villain deserve?"

Also from the same issue of the *Courant:* "Last Thursday Gov. Skene, who has been some time past in this town, was committed to gaol by order of the Committee for the Prisoners, for refusing to sign his parole".

The narrative of events for the next few months can perhaps best be told in French's own words, with what additional information is supplied by the *Courant*. Continuing his diary, we read:

> "On 1st July — "The Com. passed a resolve that the prisoners should not go out after dark on pain of imprisonment. Next day some of them went to the Com. to represent to them that their resolve prevented meeting to supper at the reasonable hour of nine o'clock and to request that they would name 10 or 11 o'clock for the hour of parting, and that they might imprison anyone found out after that time, but they were told they must conform to their customs and abide by their resolve."
>
> 11th July — "I saw a proclamation of the 4th inst. by which the Continental Congress declared the Colonies Free States and independent of Great Britain. Sentries were now kept constantly near our quarters at night because (I was told) they apprehended we received and sent intelligence.
>
> Col. Humphreys, Mr. Epaphras Bull, Brazier, and Mr. Nichols, attorney, had come from the Com. to search our quarters for firearms and ammunition, apprehending as 'twas said that I intended to head a party of Tories and cut all their throats. "The wicked man shall tremble at his own shadow and shall be afraid when there is none to hurt him".

The conduct of the prisoners was now becoming so suspicious that the following proclamation was published:

July 15th, 1776—Committee at the several towns of Springfield, Westfield, Hartford.

> 1. Resolved, whereas dangerous weapons have been found on some of the prisoners; the several committees be desired to make special search in each of their packs, pockets, etc. for the discovery of any such weapons or inimical letters therein contained.

2. That the said prisoners be not suffered to go out of any town or parish where they reside, upon any occasion or pretense, without a special permit from the Committee of such town or parish, nor allowed to be absent from their employers at any time without their leave; and that no leave of absence ought to be given them later than 1/2 hour after sunset, and that they have no leave to be absent on Sundays, except to attend public worship.

3. That the venders of spirituous liquors ought not to suffer any of the said prisoners to be drinking in their respective houses, either at their own expense or others; but if either of the committees of the respective towns and parishes, shall judge it expedient and needful that they have strong drink, they shall appoint some quitable person to supply them; but in a very sparing and moderate manner.

4. That whoever shall employ any of the above said prisoners, shall, within the space of three weeks from the time of their receiving them, transmit to the Committee from whom they received them, a copy of their agreement.

5. That no person may purchase any clothing or wearing apparel whatever, belonging to the said prisoners.

Elisha Parks, Chair.
John Pynchon, Clerk."

Following this proclamation, Major French discovered that he had lost his pistols (or thought they had been stolen) and that he could not conveniently comply with the above named order; this we infer from the following advertisement in the *Courant;* Aug. 19th, 1776:

> WHEREAS the Com. of Safety at Hartford have insisted that Maj. French should deliver to them a case of pistols which were in his possession and were some time since stolen, or at least, taken away without his privity; he hereby offers a reward of one guinea to any person who will deliver them to the printer hereof or to Mr. Knox, tavern keeper near the Ferry House, Hartford, nor shall questions be asked ————————R. They are locking pistols with the cock in the center and have silver thumbplates.

July 13, he notes in his diary, "Wrote to General Washington, reminding him of the termination of my parole 12 August next, and my desire to be exchanged."

He was not released at the expiration of his parole, probably because he had made himself obnoxious to the Committee by assuming authority over the actions of other prisoners (subordinate officers) in matters relating to church-going and their loyalty to King George. He had also been obstinate and discourteous when rebuked for this misconduct.

In these days of up-to-date reporters, we can hardly find more vivid imagery in expression and exuberance of rhetoric than the *Courant* exhibits in its account of the following occurrence:

"Hartford, July 29 —

Last Thursday one James Mahar, an Irishman, and of a savage and bloodthirsty disposition, was committed to gaol for an act of outrage to Lieut. McDermott, a regular officer, and a prisoner in this place, in giving him a dangerous wound with a cooper's knife. Mahar is a ruffian who properly belongs to a man-of-war in the service of the British King, and it is greatly to be regretted that he found means of escaping from them, as such fellows ought never to be on the land unless closely confined. Mahar it seems, being at the house of Mr. Knox, of this place, (Who by the way was not at home) became so impertinent and trouble-

some that Mrs. Knox grew uneasy and gave intimation that her comfort was intimately connected with his leaving the house. These hints, instead of producing the desired effect, brought on a paroxism of rage, and drew forth a shower of infernal rhetoric from the magazines of his wrath. A number of the regular officers in the chamber, perceiving the disagreeable situation of Mrs. Knox, one of them, viz. Capt. Hill, looking out of the window, desired her, if she could get a kettle of hot water, to scald the fellow out of the house. It must be noted that these officers conceived they had sundry times met with personal abuse from Mahar, and on that account, as well as Mrs. Knox's, perhaps, interfered in the quarrel with less reluctance. The thoughts of being scalded, however, gave new sensibility to the feelings of this nervous rascal, and furnished him with a fresh supply of vengeance for the inventors of such an *inflammatory* expedient to clear the house. Mahar in the first place, as an item of his feelings on this ocassion, consigns Capt. Hill over to damnation, and then gives him to understand that if he would venture down, he might receive a further conviction of his folly in being so officious in the quarrel, upon which Capt. Hill left the chamber without hesitation, and tho' Mahar is a stout able bodied fellow, and in the fulness of his rage attempted to come at him full butt; it seems that he made a gross mistake, and by the dexterity of Capt. Hill was soon stretched in a horizontal posture and levelled with the dust. By this time it is easy to see that nothing short of blood could appease the wrath of the incensed Mahar—He arose from the earth and went deliberately to a house a few rods distance and having armed himself with a cooper's knife (handle and blade perhaps 2 feet in length), returned, doubtless with intent to take the life of his antagonist, but Capt. Hill defended himself with a billet of wood, till at length he sprang behind him and clinched hold of his arms, whilst Maj. French and Mr. McDermott were endeavoring to wrest the knife from his hands. In this struggle Mahar gave the wound, which probably would have been fatal if the use of his arms, like a man pinioned, had not been greatly restrained by Capt. Hill. The above is a true representation of the facts, as they appeared from the evidences on examination before a magistrate."

Mahar publicly apologizes in the *Courant* Aug. 12—James Mahar issues notice saying, "I will take back my wife," whom he had previously advertised for having left him, and that he is sorry for the affray at Mr. Knox's. We quote his words: "Mr. McDermott's misfortune yields me the most cutting reflections, though as far as the operations of intoxicating spirits can extenuate the criminalities of such rash and unguarded actions; I hope my fellow men will view me in as favorable a point of light as possible, and afford me all the indulgence which the nature of the case will admit."

Matters were comparatively quiet for three weeks, until on August 19, a quarrel in the Knox house occurred over the kicking over a chair by Ensign Moland, who said "Damn the chair." Mr. Knox reproved him and he threw the chair over again and said "Damn the chair and you too." Knox retorted, "You rascal, do you damn me in my own house?", upon which Moland knocked him down and Mrs. Knox got a black eye trying to part them. Next day they were all reproved before Mr. Payne and Mr. Wadsworth.

In the early part of August, considerable correspondence passed between Maj. French and Capt. Delaplace because he, (the Captain) went to church at which the Continental Congress and the success of the American armies was prayed for. Delaplace justified his act in spirited terms, but finally desisted. French, on Aug. 28th, was, however, brought before a Com. Jesse Root, Chr., Mr. Payne and Samuel Wadsworth, accused of the "heinois" crime (as he called it) of issuing orders and directions which were termed in libel of the State of Connecticut. He was told to withdraw his order and to sign a new parole. He refused and went to jail. In jail he continues his diary, and writes:

Sept. 3d. "A young lad who was working at some picketing which was putting round the gaol for fear we should escape, said in the course of talking of the defeat of the Provincials on Long Island, that he did not know but the Regulars might soon be in possession of Hartford, but he was pretty sure we should not live to see it. Upon asking him why he tho't so, as we were all in good health, he answered that he was "sartin sure" the people would put us all to death, as he had heard some of them declare they would."

4 Sept. "This night one of the sentries over us was Mr. Root, the Chairman of the Committee's son, so scarce of men "are they."

5 Sept. "I am informed my son was wounded at the attack on Long Island — Thanks to the Gods—my boy has done his duty."

10 Sept. "Capt. McKay and Mr. Graves made their escape this night in a manner which surprised all without as much as us of their fellow prisoners, since there was no appearance of any breach and two strong prison doors were bolted and the outside one locked."

The *Courant* advertises their escape as follows:

70 DOLLARS REWARD

"Sept. 23 - '76.

ESCAPED from Hartford gaol in the State of Connecticut, in the night following the 10th inst., one Samuel McKay, a Lieut. in the British service, taken at St. Johns and confined by the Commission for having before broke his parole by running away, and one John Graves of Pittsfield, who was imprisoned for being a vile Tory and assisting the said McKay in getting away as beforesaid. Said McKay has a wife in Canada, is of light complection, light colored hair and eyes, considerably pitted with small-pox, has a long nose, is tall in stature, has a droll, fawning way in speech and behavior, uncertain what clothes he wore away; had with him a blue coat with white cuffs and lapels, a gray mix't colored coat, and a red coat, white waistcoat, a brown camblet cloak lined with green baize, and a pair of brown corduroy breeches. Graves is short in stature, has long black hair, brown complection, dary eyes, one leg shorter than t'other, appears rather simple in talk and behavior, had a snuff color's surtout and coat, green waistcoat and white flannel ditto, leather breeches and white trousers. Whoever shall take up and return to the gaol in Hartford the aforesaid McKay and Graves shall be entitled 50 dollars reward for said McKay and 20 dollars for said Graves by

EZEKIEL WILLIAMS, Sheriff

Hartford Sept. 11, 1776.

Returning again to the diary,

11 Sept. "We were confined more rigidly on account of their escaping. I sent two pair leather breeches to be cleaned, which were not allowed to pass till narrowly examined. Our sentries were doubled. The next day we were even more closely confined to the lockup behind two doors, and allowed to speak to my servant only through bars and in the presence of the sentries."

13 Sept. "We made a paper night-cap (the emblem of the Committee) and put it on a little iron figure of a man smoking and which had been the front of an and-iron in our gaol room and broke off; we also made him a paper petticoat on which we wrote the following lines with a small alteration from Hudibras — 'I like a maggot in the sore
Do that which gave me Life devour.'
This we put in our iron window for the inspection of passengers."

Here the journal of Major French ends. We may reasonably infer that the escape of the other prisoners made him feel quite lonesome and think it was time for him to "get busy" and to make his break for liberty. He did so on November 15th, together with Ensign Moland and three others, but they were caught at Branford and brought back. The following advertisement in the *Courant* of November 18th, may have stimulated their pursuers:

Fifty Dollars Reward

WHEREAS Major Christopher French, Ensign Joseph Moland and John Bickle, belonging to the British Army, Peter Herron, a Tory, and Capt. Jacob Smith, who was taken lately on Long Island in Arms, all escaped from gaol last night to join the British Army; said French is little in stature, said Moland and Herron are tall and thin, said Bickle is middling fixed and of ruddy countenance. All persons and especially all officers, civil and military, are requested to assist in pursuing and taking said prisoners. Whoever shall take up and return either of said prisoners to Hartford gaol shall be entitled to a premium of ten dollars and all necessary charges paid by

EZEKIEL WILLIAMS, Sheriff.

Hartford Nov. 16, 1776.

On December 27th, French, Moland and one other, made a second attempt to obtain liberty, this time with success, thanks to the aid of Rev. Roger Viets, the Simsbury clergyman, who secreted them. Viets was arrested, tried in January, 1777, sentenced to pay a fine of 20 pounds and to suffer a whole year's imprisonment.

John Viets was the first keeper of Newgate Prison, which was opened in December, 1773. Query: Was Reverend Roger Viets, who aided Maj. French's escape, a relative, and was this a reason for suspecting Warden Viets of disloyalty? If so, it may have a bearing on the removal of the prisoners to Hartford in 1777.

The Selectmen of Hartford petitioned the General Assembly January 8, 1778, that the prisoners be removed to some other place; complaining "that the continuing of the prisoners in this town was attended with innumerable ill effects; that the public stores and magazines were greatly exposed and in some instances lost; that intelligence was communicated to the enemies of the Country; that the prices of the necessities of life—wood, meat, and clothing—were much increased by the British officers and their servants "who do not stick at any sum to obtain the same", and that there was danger

of their forming combinations with the blacks to injure the lives and property of the people."

The treatment and disposal of prisoners of war early became a subject of serious concern, and more than two years elapsed after the beginning of hostilities before any definite agreement was reached. At first the British asserted that American belligerents were common rebels against an established and benign government, and deserved no consideration or mercy.

The gruesome reports of the prison ship horrors evidence their determination to treat them in a manner consistent with this point of view. It was not until late in the year 1777, following the surrender of Burgoyne's Army, and only after considerable correspondence and negotiation that the question gave promise of settlement. On November 14th, 1777, General Washington wrote to General Howe—

> "I am inclined to accede to your proposition—that the officers who are prisoners of war on both sides should be released and have liberty to return among their friends on parole.—If you are disposed to proceed to an exchange of all the prisoners in your possession for an equal number of those in my hands—I shall be happy to adopt the measure.—You call on me to redress the grievances of several of your officers and men who, you are pleased to say you are well informed are most injuriously and unjustifiably loaded with irons. If there is a single instance of a prisoner of war being in irons, I am ignorant of it; nor can I find on the most minute inquiry that there is the least foundation for the charge. On the contrary I have every reason to believe that your officers and men who are prisoners with us are experiencing a very different treatment.—Now we are on the subject of grievances, I am constrained to observe that I have a variety of accounts, not only from prisoners who have made their escape, but from persons who have left Philadelphia, that our private soldiers in your hands are treated in a most shocking manner to humanity and that many of them must have perished through hunger had it not been for the charitable contributions of the inhabitants".

To which General Howe replied:

> "If ever any officer or commissary under my command has deviated from the civility, care and attention due to prisoners of war—it is not consistent with my knowledge and is contrary to my directions or intention. The provisions issued to the prisoners is agreeable to a regulation long established for victualling British troops when they are on board men-of-war or on transports—moreover a field officer visits them every morning with orders to hear their complaints and to report to me.—I expect you will send passports for persons who shall not be above the rank of quartermasters or commissaries to carry supplies for the prisoners in your hands at Hartford and other places where they are confined."

Although we have not found records of the escape or release of other prisoners, it is probable that there were such from time to time. Some were no doubt exchanged, others may have died. Toward the close of the War, Congress entered into negotiations with the State of Connecticut for the use of Newgate Mines as a prison for the reception of British prisoners of war, but peace was declared before arrangements were completed.

We are able to locate some of the places of interest mentioned herein. We must remember that even as late as 1850, much of the principal business and some of the best residential section of the town lay east of Main Street.

In the days of the Revolution, the Committee of Safety all lived on Main Street.

Jesse (later Judge) Root, corner Main and Kingsley Streets.

Benj. Payne, Lawyer, next house south of Col. Jeremiah Wadsworth.

Capt. Samuel Wadsworth, near Main and Asylum.

Knox's Tavern was near the Ferry House, possibly on the present Kilbourn or on that part of Commerce Street now included in the Connecticut Boulevard.

Widow Collier's Tavern occupied the site of the old United States Hotel on the north side of City Hall Square, and Hill and Wright's leather shop, where Major French sent his breeches to be mended, was next door.

Epaphras Bull was a brazier (or worker in brass) whose shop was opposite the South Meeting House (the present South Congregational Church).

The *Courant* office (Watson the Printer) was on Main Street by the great bridge (corner Main and Wells.)

Governor Skene and family were made comfortable at the then Hooker House at the top of Elmwood Hill (opposite the present red schoolhouse in West Hartford.)

The jail stood on the site of the present Case, Lockwood and Brainard building, corner Pearl and Trumbull Streets, and was then so far out of town that at one time the prisoners for debt in confinement there, petitioned the General Assembly (then sitting at the State House), (the site of our present City Hall) that the jail limits be enlarged so far East as the Court House, "representing that they labor under many inconveniences, hardships and disadvantages,—By reason that the Gaol is in so retired and back part of the town so seldom frequented by any of the inhabitants of the Town." The grim humor of this petition is evident when we reflect that, if granted, it would have technically put the whole General Assembly into jail by its own act whenever it should be in Session.

News of the Society

When our By-Laws were revised, two honorary classes of membership were added. The first of these was called "Fellows," to recognize those rendering unusual service to the Society. At the Annual Meeting held May 18, the Standing Committee elected as the first Fellows of the Society the following members who had retired as officers of this Society: Samuel Herbert Fisher, Litchfield; James Lippincott Goodwin, Hartford; George Matthew Dutcher, Middletown; Ethelbert Allen Moore, New Britain; Hiram Bissell Carey, Farmington

The Society is deeply grateful for their long years of service and their election as Fellows for life is tangible recognition of this indebtedness.

The other class of honorary membership provided in the By-Laws is that of "Patron," in recognition of donors of funds, securities, and outstanding library or museum objects. The Standing Committee elected as our first Patrons Edgar F. Waterman of Hartford for his gifts establishing the Waterman Fund, and Houghton Bulkeley for his gift of the John Warner Barber sketches and drawings, eight Eliot Indian Tracts, and for the collection of Connecticut Election Sermons. These came from the library collected by his father, the late Morgan G. Bulkeley. In accordance with the By-Laws, the names of Patrons are permanently inscribed on the membership rolls of the Society.

Industry In An Agrarian Economy Early Eighteenth Century Connecticut

By Glenn Weaver*

In 1730 Connecticut had a population of between 38,000[1] and 58,000[2] white inhabitants, all of whom were dependent, either directly or indirectly, upon agriculture for their livelihood. There were then no cities and few centers of concentrated population. While it is true that in such towns as New London, New Haven, Norwich, Hartford, and Middletown there were to be found some of the appurtenances and something of the spirit of urban life, the chief characteristic of the Connecticut scene was its village atmosphere. All that Connecticut had by way of resources was to be found in her stubborn and none too fruitful soil.

As it had been from the time of the first settlement, Indian corn was still the staple crop. On the good land of the province, of which there was relatively little, the yield of Indian corn was sometimes as high as fifty bushels per acre, while on the hilly land a yield of as little as twenty bushels per acre was not uncommon.[3] Late in the preceding century the Connecticut Valley had become a center for wheat production, and by 1700 the Connecticut farmers were shipping grain to Boston in considerable quantities.[4] Like the yield for Indian corn, that for wheat varied from locality to locality with an average per acre of from fifteen to forty bushels. About 1726, however, there appeared a "blast" on the wheat which, perhaps not incorrectly, was blamed on the barberry bushes.[5] After this date wheat production declined rapidly and by the middle of the century wheat was even being imported from New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.[6] Rye and barley were also grown for local use. Hay, which had long been regarded as something of a drug on the market because of its ready availability in the meadows and marshes, soon became scarce as stock-raising increased, and by the middle of the century the hay shortage had become acute.[7] Potatoes were not widely raised, having been introduced only about 1720, and they did not become popular until after the Revolution.[8] In certain localities, however, potato culture may have passed beyond the experimental stage by the early 1730's.[9] Wethersfield was the greatest producer of onions in the New World, and although onions had not been grown for sale before 1710, by 1730 they were much in demand—because of their superior quality—in the other colonies and particularly in New York.[10] Windsor was Connecticut's principal center for tobacco culture. The crop had been grown in the Connecticut Valley from the time of the first settlements but before 1700 it had been grown solely for local consumption. Wethersfield was another center for tobacco growing and perhaps as early as 1704 tobacco became

*Glenn Weaver is with the Department of History, Connecticut College, New London. This essay is the outgrowth of part of a chapter of the author's dissertation, "Jonathan Trumbull: Connecticut's Merchant Magistrate," typescript in the Yale University Library, New Haven, 1952.

an important item in the Wethersfield trade with the West Indies.[11] In addition to flax, the production of which, however, did not achieve major proportions until the late 1730's, may be added—in rounding out the list of Connecticut's field crops—turnips, pumpkins, melons, squashes, and peas, all of which were raised in 1730 for local use only.[12]

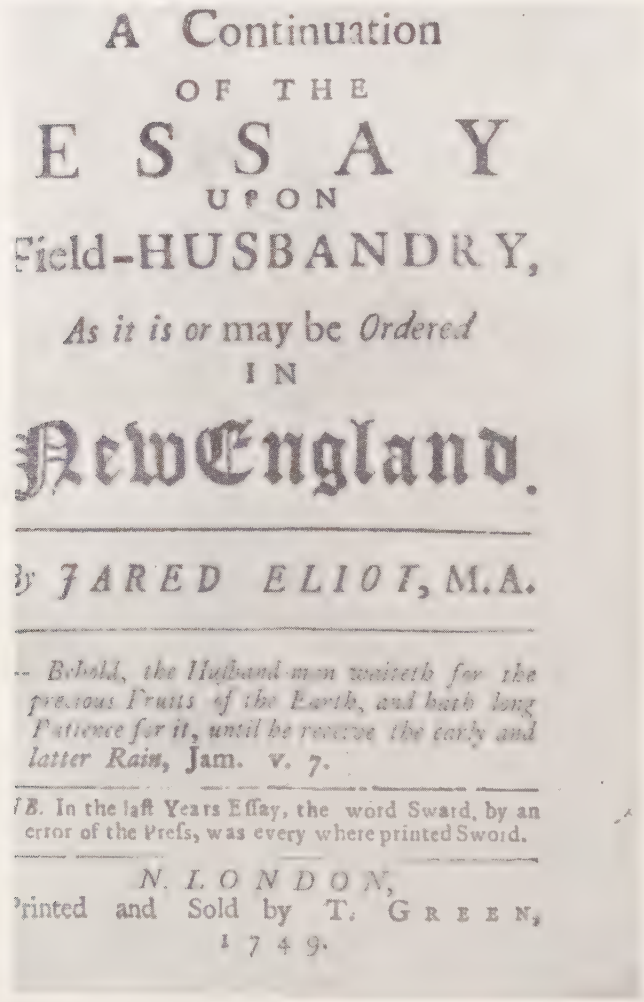
In the early eighteenth century fruit growing in Connecticut was limited to that of apples and pears but both of these were grown in great quantities. The fruit, however, was of a poor quality and was used in the making of cider and perry rather than for eating.[13]

Livestock had always been important in the economy of Connecticut and cattle, sheep, and hogs had been raised from the earliest days.[14] The cattle of Connecticut were of the breeds suitable for use as draft animals rather than those of a strictly beef or dairy type, and during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries New England cattle were inferior to those raised in England and in the countries of northern Europe, a fact probably attributable to the scarcity of winter feed and the poor provisions for winter shelter.[15] The keeping of cattle together in the common town herd also tended to deteriorate the stock. In the course of the eighteenth century, however, the Connecticut cattle showed a marked improvement. To the rather puny English breeds there were added Dutch strains from New York and Spanish strains from Virginia so that by the time of the American Revolution the cattle of Connecticut came to rival those of the middle colonies.[16] Hogs and sheep, like the cattle, were of an inferior breed. Sheep were of a particularly poor quality for, since English sheep could not be taken out of the country, the Connecticut strains had deteriorated from in-breeding.[17]

The fact that agriculture was the economic foundation of the province notwithstanding, farming in Connecticut of the early eighteenth century was a crude affair indeed. Farmers had no real understanding of the principles of crop rotation and little knowledge of the use of manure and other fertilizers. Connecticut's first scientific farmer, Jared Eliot, did not begin to publish his writings, in which he sought to popularize the results of the English Agricultural revolution, until 1748, and the unreliable advice contained in the various farmers almanacs perpetuated the superstitions and misconceptions of former generations. Actually, Connecticut's farmers were less interested in improving their old lands than in acquiring new tracts, and during the 1730's about 300,000 acres of land were offered for sale and found ready buyers. By the middle of the century all of Connecticut's public lands had been taken up by private individuals. Much of this land which had been so hastily sold by order of the General Assembly was being held by absentee owners for speculative purposes.[18]

In dealing with the authorities in Britain, Connecticut always tried to appear as a land solely devoted to agriculture and as one in which industry was non-existent. In September, 1730 Governor Talcott of Connecticut wrote as follows to the Board of Trade:

> "Our manufactures are inconsiderable. . . . Some few [persons] are imployed in tanning and shoe-making and other handicrafts, others in building, joyner-work, [and] smiths, without which we could not subsist."[19]



A Continuation
OF THE
ESSAY
UPON
Field-HUSBANDRY,
As it is or may be *Ordered*
IN
NewEngland.

By JARED ELIOT, M.A.

-- *Behold, the Husband-man waiteth for the precious Fruits of the Earth, and hath long Patience for it, until he receive the early and latter Rain,* Jam. v. 7.

NB. In the laſt Years Eſſay, the word Sward, by an error of the Preſs, was every where printed Sword.

N. LONDON,
Printed and Sold by T. GREEN,
1749.

Jared Eliot of Killingworth published six essays on Field Husbandry in New England between 1748–1759 which were widely read in America

Obviously, it was Governor Talcott's purpose to understate the importance of the manufactures of the province and to suggest that the only type of industry in the colony was that of a service nature.

Actually, the industrial development of Connecticut had passed beyond this stage by 1730 and there was a considerable amount of activity in the extractive and processing industries of which the British government of the time was most certainly well-aware. Around each of Connecticut's agricultural products there had grown up a processing industry which prepared the produce for shipment for local use. In some instances home industry of an even more complex sort had been making use of Connecticut's agricultural and forest products, the finished work of which had become articles of inter-colonial and trans-oceanic trade.

Since grains were the most important crops of the province, it was to be expected that flour-milling should have occupied a significant place in the provincial economy. In the early days the mill was something of a *quasi*-public institution. Often the town mill was built by community labor and the miller was usually given "encouragement" in the form of a grant of land and a monopoly of the milling for the town.[20] Although some of its "public" character had disappeared by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, the mill was still an indispensable establishment in each town. Connecticut flour, however, was not so highly regarded as that from the middle colonies. The wheat "blast" had affected both the quantity, and the quality of the grain and the flour produced from this defective grain left much to be desired. Furthermore, the mills of Pennsylvania and New Jersey used better millstones and seem to have otherwise been better equipped than those of Connecticut.[21] This, too, was probably reflected in the quality of the flour.

Indian corn was grown to such a great extent that Connecticut farmers sought to use the corn stalks for something besides fodder. Early in the century experiments had been made in the making of molasses from the green stalks, and in 1717 the General Assembly granted Edward Hinman of Stratford the sole right to manufacture molasses by this process. In theory the plan was a good one as it was possible to cut the stalk above the ear of corn and thus do no harm to the grain. In actual practice, however, the project was a failure, for, although a small quantity of molasses was actually produced and distilled into rum, the process was so expensive as to render competition with the West India molasses impossible.[22]

Among the first settlers, beer had been the common drink. Early Connecticut beer was probably similar to the English beer of the time and may have been of a fairly good quality. As was true in so many of Connecticut's processing manufactures, the quality was not long maintained, and there was, until the time of the American Revolution, a gradual but certain deterioration. This was due, in large part, to the cheapness of rum and cider. As the latter two came to so largely supplant beer, beer-production fell off and, although there were profitable breweries operated at various places in the colony,[23] it became more and more a household industry, so that by the time of American independence it was carried on largely by local tavern keepers for their own use. Whatever may have been the shortcomings of Connecticut beer, New England malt—made from Indian corn and barley—was much prized by brewers in other colonies, and throughout the colonial period it was shipped to Pennsylvania and New York. This, however, was no index of the

quality of Connecticut malt, for American beer was generally of a poor quality, and the beer of Connecticut was probably no worse than that of the other colonies.[24]

By 1700 cider had replaced beer as the beverage of the daily diet in all sections of New England. Kentish, Pippin, Pearmin, and Golden Russetin apples were used in its manufacture, and Orange and Bergamont pears were used in making perry, a drink similar in taste to cider. Prodigious quantities of cider and perry were consumed and it was not uncommon for a single family to store as much as forty barrels for winter use.[25] Like the flour mill, each town had its cider mill.

Of all of Connecticut's processing industries the most important was meat-packing. Refrigeration was unknown in colonial New England and the process of modern canning was yet to be discovered. Occasionally farmers packed freshly killed poultry in snow, and oysters were sometimes packed in vinegar for export, but the three processes for meat preservation used in eighteenth century Connecticut were smoking, dry-salting, and salt pickling and each family used one or more of these processes in the preparation of the winter meat supply.[26] Jonathan Trumbull recorded in his diary an elaborate recipe for the preparation of what must have been most flavorsome bacon:

> "To 15^{lb} Pork take 1¼ oz of Salt Petre—⅝ of a p^{d} Sugar, 1¼ good handful Salt, a little better y^{t} ¼ oz Cloves, Those Ingredients make fine, & mix them Together, & rubb the meat well therewith, let it Lye 3 or 4 days, y^{n} Cover it with Pickle half Strong Eno To bear an Egg, let y^{e} meat Lye a Month in it, in w^{ch} Time Take it out 2 or 3 Times & Stirr up y^{e} Pickle, & put y^{r} meat in again, Then Smoak it well about a month—
>
> Some add a p^{t} of bear with Some Molasses—"

As this was a private recipe, it is to be assumed that the bacon prepared for market was cured by a much more simple method.

As meat packing was the most extensive industry of the colony, and as it involved the health of the residents, the Assembly passed laws regulating the packing by prescribing the type and quality of containers in which the meat was packed, and by standardizing the weight and measures by which it was to be sold. On May 14, 1674 the General Assembly ordered the appointment in each town of one officer, "who when any controversie shall arise between the buyer and the seller concerning the fowlenes or badness of corn and the unmerchantableness of pork when payd by the pownd, to regulate and decide such controversies."[28] This law set no specific standard and left all decisions to the judgment of the officer. As meat was being packed in increasing quantities for export, and as controversy arising over the quality of meat was seldom merely an affair involving two residents of the same town, it was imperative that the law be designed in such a manner as to insure a good name for the colonial products abroad.[29]

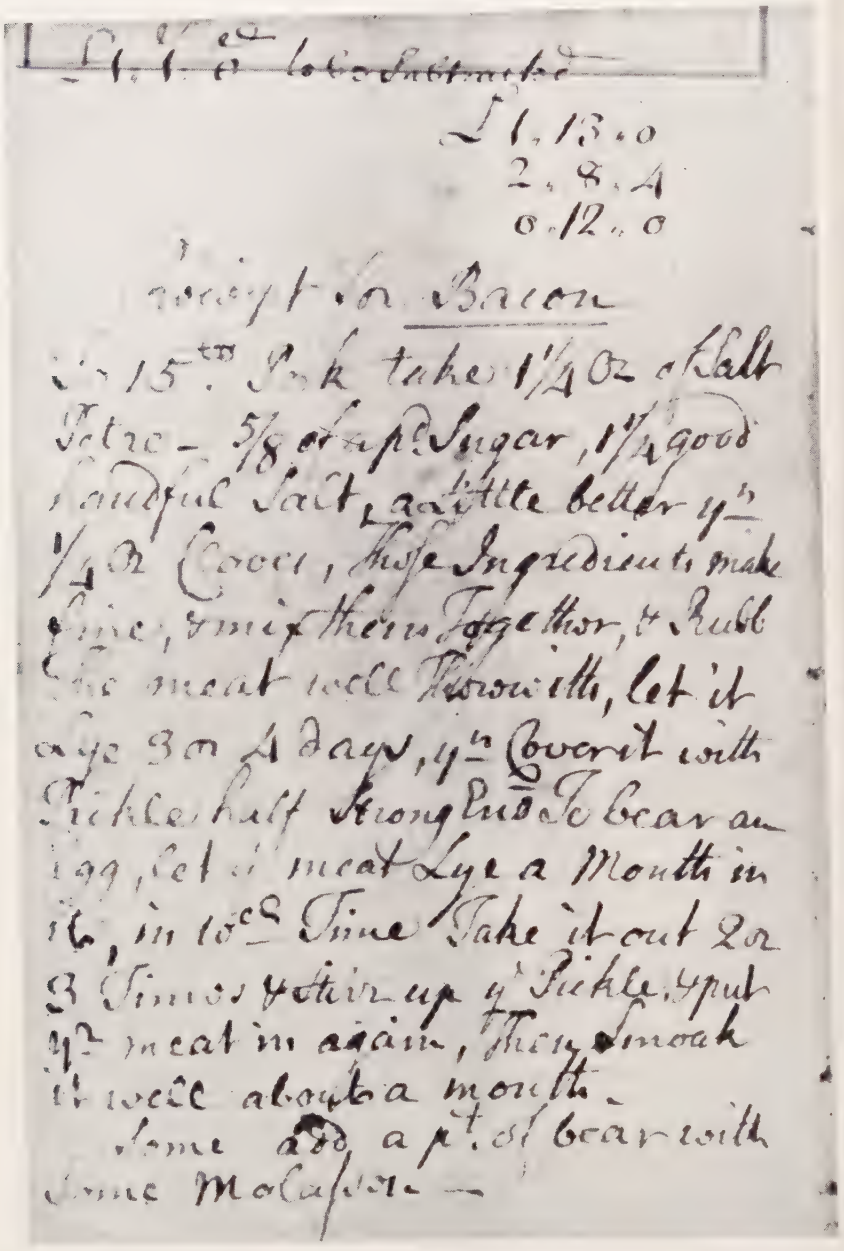
In response to this need the General Assembly on May 10, 1687 passed "an Act for regulating the Assize of Casks and preventing deceit in Packing of Fish, Beef and Pork for sale." This act provided for standard-size containers conforming with those used in London. Butts were to contain 126 gallons; hogsheads, 63 gallons; tierces, 42 gallons; and barrels 31½ gallons. All had to be made from sound and well-seasoned wood free from sap. Each town was

ordered to appoint "guagers" for the containers and the town was to pay these inspectors at the rate of four pence per tun. The cooper was required to brand his mark on each container and failure to comply was to carry a penalty of 20 shillings. Upon sufficient proof, coopers making inferior goods were to forfeit the condemned product and to pay a fine of 10 shillings, more or less, depending upon the size of the defective container. In all towns where fish, beef, or pork were packed the guagers were to see that the packing was properly done and they were to pay particular attention that in packing beef and pork the correct number of quarters and heads were in each container and that the better parts should not be left out. Each packer was required to brand the container with his mark, showing the time and place of packing. Goods already sold by the packer were not to be opened by him again and shifting the contents of one container to another was punishable by fine and forfeiture. Provisions already sold but held by the packer for more than three months during the period between May and October were to be re-inspected upon exportation, the decayed portion of the meat removed, and the "undamaged" portion repacked under the guagers' supervision.[30] This law remained in effect throughout the colonial period.

Leather, the by-product of the packing industry, was made into shoes, aprons, and breeches, the latter two articles being worn by all who engaged in rough, outdoor labor. These articles were made by leather workers and cobblers who catered to a local trade and by the members of the families for their own use. There seems to have been no evidence of large-scale operations in leather manufactures. In England it was generally thought that the woolen and linen cloth made in Connecticut was also being produced at home solely for use within the family, and the same may have been true regarding the hemp which was being produced in small quantities in 1730.[31] The Woolen Act of 1699[32] had legally restricted the sale of woolen cloth to the colony of its production and the colonists had avoided clashes with the law on this score.

Hat makers, on the other hand, were less successful in concealing the extent of their business and thus aroused the enmity of the Company of Hatters of London who complained that the New England hatters were selling their products in Spain, Portugal, and the British West Indies.[33] Parliament responded with the Hat Act of 1732[34] and nipped in the bud what had promised to be a flourishing business in New York and the colonies to the south. In New England, however, the act was largely disregarded or evaded and the industry continued to thrive.[35]

From the extensive forests of Connecticut came a multitude of products. Most widely produced was potash, which played the same part in the hardwood areas that tar and rosin played in the pine-forested sections. The process of manufacture was a simple one consisting merely of leaching out the soluble portions of wood ashes by draining water through the ashes placed in barrels. Lye was produced by boiling the water used in the leaching process. Each farmer made his own lye for soap-making and usually had a surplus for market. Some potash was produced commercially in small factories where ashes were collected from nearby farmers.[36] These primitive works were to be found in relatively new communities where there was still an abundance of wood. At this time large quantities were still being produced in Con-



£1. 13. 0
2. 8. 4
0. 12. 0

Receipt for Bacon

To 15th Pork take 1¼ Oz of Salt Petre — 5/8 of a pd Sugar, 1¼ good handful Salt, a little better yn ¼ B Coarse, those Ingredients make fine, & mix them together, & Rub the meat well therewith, let it lye 3 or 4 days, yn Cover it with Pickle half Strong Pickle & bear an Egg, let ye meat Lye a Month in it, in 10d Time Take it out 2 or 3 Times & stir up yt Pickle, & put yt meat in again, then smoak it well about a month.

Some add a pt of bear with some Molasses —

Jonathan Trumbull's receipt for bacon, as it appears in his Diary, 1724–1738

necticut and throughout the Connecticut-Valley-portion of Massachusetts. Most of it was brought down the river to the coastal towns where it found a ready sale. A considerable amount of Connecticut potash was made into pearl ashes (or potassium carbonate) by exposing the ashes to furnace heat.[37]

Connecticut's vast forested areas were mostly hardwood. In the isolated softwood areas, a small amount of tar and turpentine was produced and shipped to Boston,[38] but from the hardwoods came the supply of oak wood so necessary to the production of barrel staves which, in turn, found their chief use in Connecticut's constantly growing provision trade. In England, Connecticut oak wood met with some prejudice, for although it was believed to be satisfactory for the making of barrel staves, it was thought to be too soft for use as ship timber,[39] and, as a result, Connecticut lumber found little sale in England. With Connecticut ships as a finished product, however, the situation was quite different. New England ships were highly regarded in England where they were thought to be "well-built with strong bottoms." Indeed, the only fault which seems to have been found with them was that they were not always the "best sailers," but even this defect was attributed to "their building so very strong."[40] Thus it would seem that what the Connecticut ships lacked in the quality of their materials must have been compensated for in superior craftsmanship. Practically all of the towns along Long Island Sound and the Connecticut River had shipyards in which vessels of varying sizes (usually the smaller coasting craft) were being built.

Connecticut's minerals had hardly been touched by 1730 and metal manufactures were of a most limited sort. Copper had been discovered at Simsbury in 1707 and two years later the Simsbury Mining Company, consisting of a number of prominent men of the colony, was chartered by the General Assembly. The company brought in German smelters who extracted the copper, but because the ore had a high quartz content, it was impossible to operate the mine and furnace at a profit and the company soon went bankrupt.[41] Bog iron had been taken from the marshes from the beginning of settlement, but it was not until 1732 that iron ore was discovered in the northwestern part of the colony at Salisbury.[42]

The one significant observation which can be made regarding Connecticut's industry in the early eighteenth century was that it was operated on an exceedingly small scale. The shipyards, which may have been the establishments employing the largest number of men at a single location, were usually operated with from five to ten workers, and even the largest ones seldom employed over twenty-five. Sawmills were ordinarily operated by a man and a boy, and gristmills were staffed by the owner, his family, and one or two hired hands. Even in the larger towns the workshops of the time were operated by the owner, one or two journeymen, and an apprentice or two. Needless to say, each household was a factory in miniature where both spinning wheel and loom were operated by the members of the family.[43]

Governor Talcott's statements to the contrary notwithstanding, it was not by design that Connecticut industry had failed to advance beyond this primitive stage. In the English economic thought of the early eighteenth century monopolies were regarded as a prime means of promoting economic prosperity and such English industries as Parliament chose to foster were the recipients of this protection. In Connecticut the Assembly followed the same course. In 1708 a monopoly was given for the production of pitch. In 1717 Edward

Hinman of Stratford was given the sole right to produce molasses from corn stalks.[44] Other monopolies were for linseed oil in 1718,[45] for duck in 1725,[46] and for the manufacture of iron and steel by a "newly-discovered process" in 1728.[47]

In spite of this "encouragement" from the Assembly, industry failed to flourish for there was, first of all, the fallacy of the monopoly as a stimulant to trade. Also, there were ever present in the colonial economy, factors which imposed rigid limitations upon expansion, and which were recognized by at least some of the colonials. The attraction of cheap land was constantly draining off the artisans from the older settlements and thus wages were kept at a level far above those of the workers in England. Capital was scarce and, as a result, only such industries—with the possible exception of shipbuilding—as required a small investment, could be undertaken. Finally, there was the limited market due to a small population, and this went a long way toward precluding any large-scale industrial operations.[48]

Although Governor Talcott's report of 1730 was made with tongue in cheek, he could, perhaps, have been more truthful about Connecticut's industrial state of affairs and still not have incurred the serious displeasure of the authorities in London. Actually, while the British mercantile theory was that all manufacturing should be done in Great Britain, there were certain articles which England neither wished to export to the colonies nor to import from them. This type of product included such things as horses, grains, beef, pork, fish and such manufactures as beer, flour, bread, lumber, and rum. Some of these items, all of which were agricultural in their origins, were not brought from the colonies because of a desire to protect the English producers of similar articles. Others were not sent out to the colonies because production was so cheap in the colonies as to make English competition unprofitable. Upon commodities such as these England had no desire to place restrictions as to their manufacture and sale, and this was—in the main—the type of product which was made in Connecticut. On the other hand, the production of goods involving a more complicated manufacturing process was regarded as the privilege of Britain alone. Such items as firearms, gunpowder, medical supplies, glass, and paper were out of the question for manufacture in Connecticut, and Governor Talcott would certainly have had nothing to report along these lines. Competition between Britain and the Colonies would have come in the manufacture of products of an intermediate type. England wanted to limit the manufacture of items such as woolen goods, ironware, and leather goods that could be produced in the colonies and thus compete with the mother country.[49] Even in this line there were no illegal operations. In 1730 the wool supply of Connecticut was hardly sufficient to meet the demands of the home industry and there was doubtless no violation of the Woolen Act. Neither had iron been found in sufficient quantities to more than meet the local demand. All of the leather that could be found within the colony was quickly made into shoes and the leather breeches which were the everyday wear of the workingman.

Thus it can be seen that industrially Connecticut was neither self-sufficient nor completely dependent upon the Mother Country. England supplied the colony with the fine manufactures which Connecticut would have been unable to provide for herself, and the colonial mills and shops prepared the agricultural surpluses for the market or home consumption.

FOOTNOTES

[1] J. H. Trumbull and C. J. Hoadly, *Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut* (15 vols., Hartford, 1850-1900), VII, 584. Hereafter cited as *Conn. Col. Recs.*

[2] Franklin B. Dexter, "Estimates of Population in the American Colonies," *Proceedings* of the American Antiquarian Society, New Series, V (Oct., 1877 [1889]), 32. Dexter thinks the former figure is too low. The one he gives is his own estimate, but in view of the fact that Connecticut officials were prone to overstate their poverty in official reports to England it would not be unreasonable to think that population figures may have been greater than those reported. Evarts B. Greene and Virginia D. Harrington accept the lower figure. *American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790* (New York, 1932), p. 49.

[3] Edward H. Jenkins, "Connecticut Agriculture" in Norris Galpin Osborne, ed., *History of Connecticut in Monographic Form* (5 vols., New York, 1925), II, 326; Percy Wells Bidwell and John I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States 1620-1860* (New York, 1941), p. 101.

[4] Edward C. Kirkland, *A History of American Economic Life* (New York, 1932), p. 59.

[5] E. H. Jenkins, "Connecticut Agriculture," pp. 327, 337.

[6] E. C. Kirkland, *A History of American Economic Life*, p. 59.

[7] Jared Eliot, *Essays Upon Field Husbandry in New England and Other Papers, 1748-1762* (Harry J. Carman and Rexford G. Tugwell, eds., New York, 1934), II, 18, 27; E. H. Jenkins, "Connecticut Agriculture," p. 327.

[8] *Ibid.*, 328-329.

[9] Account Book of Jonathan Trumbull, Ledger E, 1735-1744, mss. in Connecticut Historical Society, *Passim*. Trumbull bought potatoes from farmers of Lebanon and Hebron.

[10] E. H. Jenkins, "Connecticut Agriculture," pp. 329-330.

[11] Adrian Francis McDonald, "The History of Tobacco Production in Connecticut," Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut *Tercentenary Pamphlets*, LII (1936), 4-5.

[12] Account Book of Jonathan Trumbull Ledger E, *Passim*.

[13] E. H. Jenkins, "Connecticut Agriculture," p. 330.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 335.

[15] Lyman Carrier, *The Beginnings of Agriculture in America* (New York, 1923), pp. 254-255. Carrier also mentions the fact that mules were being raised in Connecticut in the early eighteenth century when they were almost unknown in the other colonies. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

[16] Arthur Cecil Bining, *The Rise of American Economic Life* (New York, [1943]), pp. 56-57.

[17] Jared Eliot, *Field Husbandry*, p. 20.

[18] O. Zeichner, *Connecticut's Years of Controversy, 1750-1776* (Williamsburg, Va. [1949]), p. 30; Nelson Prentiss Mead, *Connecticut as a Corporate Colony* (Lancaster, Pa., 1906), pp. 70-73.

[19] *Conn. Col. Recs.*, VII, 584.

[20] J. Leander Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures from 1608-1860* (3 vols., Philadelphia, 1868), I, 131.

[21] Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* (Edition of 1929, 3 vols., Washington, 1929), I, 178.

[22] *Conn. Col. Recs.*, VI, 26; E. H. Jenkins, "Connecticut Agriculture," p. 326.

[23] Jonathan Trumbull operated a successful brewery at Lebanon.

[24] [Gallus Thomann], *American Beer: Glimpses of its History and Description of its Manufacture* (New York, 1909), pp. 14, 51-52.

[25] E. H. Jenkins, "Connecticut Agriculture," p. 330; Alice Morse Earle, *Stage-Coach and Tavern Days* (New York, 1900), pp. 125-131.

[26] V. S. Clark, *History of Manufactures*, I, 482.

[27] Flyleaf of Jonathan Trumbull's Diary 1724-1738, ms. in Connecticut Historical Society.

[28] *Conn. Col. Recs.*, II, 224.

[29] Emory R. Johnson and others, *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States* (2 vols., Washington, 1915), I, 62.

[30] *Conn. Col. Recs.*, III, 417-418. Other products were also inspected. Pipe staves

were regulated in size and quality by the act of 1641. *Ibid.*, I, 67. Leather inspectors were ordered to be appointed in 1662. *Ibid.*, I, 75.

[31] David MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce, Manufactures, Fisheries and Navigation* (4 vols., London, 1805), III, 187.

[32] 10 William III, c.16.

[33] D. MacPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, III, 189.

[34] 5 Geo. II, c.22.

[35] V. S. Clark, *History of Manufactures*, I, 23.

[36] Witt Bowden, *The Industrial History of the United States* (New York, [1930]), pp. 77-78. The process for making potash is described under "Potash" in Malachy Postlethwayt, *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* (4th ed., 2 vols., London, 1774), II. The main body of this work is unpaged.

[37] Clive Day, *History of Commerce of the United States* (New York, 1925), pp. 22, 57; W. Bowden, *Industrial History of the United States*, p. 78.

[38] Curtis Putnam Nettels, *The Money Supply of the American Colonies Before 1720* [Number 20 of the University of Wisconsin *Studies in the Social Sciences and History*] (Madison, 1934), p. 106.

[39] William Douglass, *A Summary, Historical and Political . . . of the Present State of the British Settlements in North America* (2 vols., London, 1760), II, 276.

[40] M. Postlethwayt, *Universal Dictionary*, I, xxv.

[41] H. J. Carman and R. G. Tugwell in Introduction to Jared Eliot, *Field Husbandry*, pp. xvi-xvii.

[42] The most detailed, if not the most accurate, account of the opening of the Salisbury mines is W. H. C. Pynchon, "Iron Mining in Connecticut," *Connecticut Magazine*, V (May, 1899), 277-278.

[43] Richard B. Morris, *Government and Labor in Early America* (New York, 1946), pp. 40-42.

[44] *Conn. Col. Recs.*, V, 46; VI, 26.

[45] *Ibid.*, VI, 79-80.

[46] *Ibid.*, VI, 572.

[47] *Ibid.*, VII, 174.

[48] C. P. Nettels, *Money Supply of the American Colonies*, p. 68.

[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

CORRECTION: On page 64, April 1954 issue of the *Bulletin*, "The *Bounty* Bible," we make the following corrections:

1) paragraph four should read: " . . . Parson Ferris is the present resident missionary for the inhabitants, and one of the leaders of the community. Floyd H. McCoy, postmaster and public relations officer, is the sixth in descent from Fletcher Christian."

2) " . . . She (Mrs. McCoy) proudly told me that a glass covered case has been made for it, and that it is placed in front of their church . . . "

NOTE: The increase in genealogical correspondence within the past eight months is such that the Chief of Reading Room, who does the genealogical research, is unable to be as prompt in covering the queries as she has been to date. We would like our members to know, however, that all genealogical correspondence will be answered as promptly as possible.

"Rude and Prophane Behaviour" in the Litchfield Meeting House in 1764

By Kenneth Scott*

On Sunday morning, June 8, 1764, three Litchfield youths arrived early at the meeting house. Two of them, Ashbel Catlin, the son of John and Margaret Catlin, and Thomas Sheldon, the son of Captain Elisha and Elizabeth Sheldon, were eighteen years of age. Ashbel had been born in Litchfield but Thomas was a native of Lyme, whence he had removed to Litchfield with his parents. Their companion, Alexander Alford, who was twelve years old, was the son of Benedict, Jr., and Jerusha Alford and came from Windsor. His father had died on February 15, 1764, and his mother presumably at an earlier date, so he had come to Litchfield to live with his guardian, John Catlin.[1]

One of the three had been accustomed to sit in the first pew from the southwest corner of the end gallery and he was annoyed by the fact that Nim, the negro slave of Colonel Ebenezer Marsh, was making a practice of taking a seat in the same pew. Long before this the public meeting house "had been seated and pewed in such Manner that the English and other white People and Freemen of said Place by established Custom and Usage had been wont & used to set on Lord's Days in certain Places, Seats and Pews exclusive of the black people Servants and Slaves in said Town," whereas the "black People and Slaves by the aforesaid Custom and Usage had been wont according to the Appointment of said Town and proprietors of said Meeting House to sit by themselves in certain other Seats."[2]

Nim's conduct, therefore, seemed to some citizens to be "indecent & unbecoming" and it "tended greatly to the Disturbance of the People attending public Worship in said Meeting House as well as [its being] very insolent for any of said black People and Slaves to set on Lords Days in said Meeting House in any of the aforesaid Pews and Seats So by Custom & Usage appropriated to the use of said white people."[3] The person most vexed was one of the boys, probably Ashbel Catlin, for his father and others approached Colonel Marsh on the subject. Marsh, a man of about sixty-three at the time, who had a distinguished career as judge of probate, judge of county court, representative and selectman,[4] was impressed by the representations about "such irregular and indecent Conduct" on the part of his slave and he "strictly charged and forbid the said Nim his said Servant any more siting in said Pew."

The Catlins and their associates, with reason as it seems, put little faith in Colonel Marsh's influence over his slave, for one of them put "an Iron Instrument" on the door of the pew to fasten it. Nim, however, broke off the

* Kenneth Scott, Professor of Modern Languages at Wagner College, is a native of Connecticut. He has published a number of books dealing with Ancient and American history. His articles have appeared in American and European magazines and are concerned, chiefly, with Greek and Roman religion, and the Colonial period of American History.

instrument with force and declared "with horrid Oaths" that he would "strew the said Pew with the Gutts or Bowels of those who should dare to oppose his siting in said Pew."

On June 8 the three lads, determined to put an end to Nim's "insolence," for he continued to take a seat in the pew, arrived before the minister but not before a number of worshippers, one of whom was Nim, who was already seated in the disputed pew. So far there seems to have been no doubt about the situation but there are two different versions of what next transpired.

The story told on July 30 by three grandjurymen, Edward Phelps, Jr., Charles Woodruff and Mark Prindle, and two tithingmen, Elisha Kilborn and Abijah Peck, in a formal complaint to Timothy Collins, Justice of the Peace,[5] is as follows: young Sheldon, Catlin and Alford entered the pew where Nim was sitting "in the Peace of God" and "threw the said Negroe headlong out of said Pew and contrary to the will and desire of said Negroe man." The complainants, who cited as witnesses Abner Baldwin, Jonathan Mason and Joshua Hubbard, affirmed that the "Rude Prophane and unlawful Behaviour" of the youths was "greatly to the Disturbance of many of his Majesties faithful and religious Subjects" and was contrary to statute law.[6]

On the other hand, Catlin, Sheldon and Alford said that they "proceeded into said Pew, disposed of their Hats by hanging up the same and then in a peaceable Manner & with a low Voice told the said Nim that he must depart & leave said Pew to which he answered in a most contemptuous & insolent Manner that he would not go out of said Pew & altogether refused so to do but instead thereof ordered the Defendants to go out of the same and thereupon the Def[ts] with a gentle Hand laid hold of him the said Nim and with so much Force only as was necessary to amove him out of said Pew put & removed him out of the same & that without making any Noise themselves other than such as was necessaryly made by the Struggle with the said Nim as he with all his Strength oppos[d] his being put out as aforesaid all which Struggle however did not continue longer than the Space of one Minute and was over before the Arrival of the Minister into said Meeting House, which Nim being so put out of said Pew was by one of the Constables of sd Town then present ordered & directed to go to the aforesaid Seats in said Meeting House provided for the Accommodation of such Negroes & Slaves as aforesaid and the Def[ts] quietly continued their Place & Siting in said Pew as well they might which is the same & only rude & profane Behaviour mentioned in the Presentment . . ."[7]

Justice Collins on August 1, 1764, issued writs for the arrest of the young men and for the summons of the witnesses. Constable Asa Hopkins reported on August 6 that the accused had been apprehended and the evidences summoned. Mr. Strong, the King's Attorney, termed the plea of the defendants insufficient and on August 16 the defendants were found guilty and sentenced by Justice Collins to pay a fine of three shillings each and costs of prosecution amounting to £1/3/1.[8]

The defendants, doubtless as a matter of principle, since the fines and costs were not large, appealed the decision of Justice Collins to the Superior Court. This body in 1766 decided that there was manifest error in Justice Collins' judgment, which the Superior Court "reversed sett aside and made null & void with all the proceeding thereon."[9]

FOOTNOTES

[1] See Litchfield Vital Statistics (in the office of the Town Clerk of Litchfield) I, p. 47; Lyme Vital Statistics (in the office of the Town Clerk of Lyme) I, p. 9; Windsor Vital Statistics (in the office of the Town Clerk of Windsor) II, p. 285.

[2] Superior Court Files, Litchfield, August Term, 1764, plea of the defendants in the case of Rex vs. Thomas Sheldon &c.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Dwight Whitney Marsh, *Marsh Genealogy* (Amherst, Mass.: Press of Carpenter & Morehouse, 1895), p. 29.

[5] Collins was first chosen justice of the peace in 1753; see Alain C. White, *The History of the Town of Litchfield, Connecticut* 1720-1920 (Litchfield: Enquirer Print, 1920), p. 302.

[6] Superior Court Files, Litchfield, August Term, 1764, complaint of Edward Phelps, Jr., Charles Woodruff, Mark Prindle, Elisha Kilborn and Abijah Peck.

[7] Superior Court Files, Litchfield, August Term, 1764, plea of the defendants in the case of Rex vs. Sheldon &c.

[8] Superior Court Files, Litchfield, August Term, 1764, papers in the case of Rex vs. Sheldon &c. The Superior Court Files are in the Connecticut State Library in Hartford and are here cited with the kind permission of Mr. James Brewster, State Librarian.

[9] Superior Court Records (in the Connecticut State Library), 16, Litchfield, 1766.

Recent Acquisitions

The year 1953-4 was a most profitable one so far as acquiring rare Connecticut Imprints was concerned. The following, largely by purchase, were added to our extensive collection of titles printed in Connecticut prior to 1800:

An Address to Major-General Tryon, written in consequence of his late expedition into Connecticut. [*N.pub.*] *Printed MDCCLXXIX.* 15 pp.

ALSOP, RICHARD

Poem; sacred to the memory of George Washington, late president of the United States, and commander in chief of the armies of the United States. Adapted to the 22d of Feb. 1800. . . . *Hartford: Printed by Hudson and Goodwin. 1800.* 23 pp.

[BALDWIN, EBENEZER]

Funeral oration in memory of Mr. Jonathan Lyman, late tutor of Yale-College, and since instructor at the Academic-school at Hatfield, who departed this life at Springfield, May 4, 1766. . . . Pronounced in the meeting-house at Hatfield, June 18th, A.D. 1766. *New-Haven: Printed by Samuel Green, . . .* 1767. 18 pp.

BARTHOLOMEW, ANDREW

Some remarks upon the claims and doings of the consociation met at Wallingford relative to the ordination of Mr. Dana. And also upon some things written in defence of said consociation. By . . . pastor of the Church of Christ in Harwinton. *New-Haven: Printed by James Parker and Company, MDCCLXII.* 16 pp.

CHANNING, HENRY

God admonishing his people of their duty, as parents and masters. A sermon, preached at New-London, December 20th, 1786. Occasioned by the execution of Hannah Ocuish, a mulatto girl, aged 12 years and 9 months. For the murder of Eunice Bolles, aged 6 years and 6 months. By . . . The second edition. *New-London: Printed by T. Green. M,DCC,LXXXVII.* 31 pp.

THE CHARTER of the city of Norwich. Granted by the General Assembly of the state of Connecticut, holden at Hartford, on the second Tuesday of May, 1784. *Norwich: Printed by John Tumbull [sic] [1784]* 16 pp.

A COPY of a letter written by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and found under a stone sixty-five years after his crucifiction. *Windham, Printed. 1792.* 8 pp.

DWIGHT, TIMOTHY
Discourse, delivered at New-Haven, Feb. 22, 1800; on the character of George Washington, Esq. At the request of the citizens. By . . . president of Yale-college. *New Haven: Printed by Thomas Green and Son, 1800.* 55 pp.

[GRISWOLD, ALEXANDER VIETS]
Short sketch of the life of Mr. Lent Munson. . . . And A discourse, delivered at Harwinton, on the 5th day of January, 1797, occasioned by the death of Mr. Lent Munson. . . . *Litchfield: Printed by Thomas Collier. 1797.* 8, 16 pp.

GRISWOLD, STANLEY
Statement of the singular manner of proceeding of the Rev. Association, in the south part of Litchfield County, in an ecclesiastical prosecution, by them instituted against the Rev. . . . pastor of the First Church of Christ in New-Milford; . . . Together with a subsequent address to said Association, by Nehemiah Strong, Esq. of said New-Milford, . . . To which is added a short Appendix. *Hartford: Printed by Elisha Babcock. 1798.* 32 pp.

H[ALL], E[LIHU]
The present way of the country in maintaining the gospel ministry by a publick rate or tax, is lawful, equitable & agreeable to the gospel. As the same is argued and proved in way of dialogue between John Quericticus & Thomas Casuisticus near neighbours in the country. By E. H. . . . *N. London, Printed and sold by T. Green, 1794.* 74 pp.

JUVENAL POEMS: or The alphabet in verse. Designed for the entertainment of all good boys and girls, and no others. . . . *Hartford, Printed by John Babcock. 1800.* 28, (2) pp.

LELAND, JOHN
The rights of conscience inalienable, and therefore religious opinions not cognizable by law; or, the high-flying church-man, stript of his legal robe, appears a Yaho. By . . . *New-London: Printed by T. Green & Son, M,DCC,XCI.* 29, 1 pp.

[MACGOWAN, JOHN]
Priestcraft defended. A sermon occasioned by the expulsion of six young gentlemen from the University of Oxford, for praying, reading, and expounding the Scriptures. Humbly dedicated to Mr. V — — C — —, and the H — — ds of H — —s. By their humble servant, The Shaver. The twelfth edition. *London: Printed. New-London: Re-printed and sold by Timothy Green, . . . 1773.* 24 pp.

MARSH, EBENEZER GRANT
Oration, delivered at Wethersfield, February 22, 1800; on the death of General George Washington, who died December 14, 1799. . . . *Hartford: Printed by Hudson and Goodwin. 1800.* 16 pp.

MATHER, MOSES
Divine sovereignty displayed by predestination: or, the doctrine of the decrees considered in its proper light, and real tendency. By . . . pastor of the Church of Christ in Middlesex. *New-Haven: Printed by James Parker and Company, at the Post-Office, 1763.* 44 pp.

THE MOUNTAIN piper; or, The history of Edgar and Matilda. . . . *Hartford: Printed by J. Babcock. 1796.* 31 pp.

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

JUST PUBLISHED

Volume XXVIII, *Collections* of The Connecticut Historical Society. John Cotton Smith Papers, August 22, 1814–February 3, 1815
293 pages, indexed Price $3.00 $2.40 to members
Shipping weight two pounds

olume III, *The Waterman Family, Descendants of Richard Waterman of rovidence, Rhode Island* by Donald Lines Jacobus and Edgar Francis Waterıan.
804 pages, indexed Price $25 $20 to members
Shipping weight five pounds

Volumes I-II of *The Waterman Family* . . . are still available at $15 each, r both for $25.

Connecticut residents please add 3% Sales Tax

emainders of the following have been located, and are for sale, prices net:

Discourse on the Doctrine of the Trinity . . . by Thomas Robbins, New Bedford [Mass.], 1836 .50

he Scholar's Arithmetic: or, Federal Accountant by Daniel Adams, econd edition, Leominster, Mass., 1802 1.00

tatue of Colonel Thomas Knowlton Ceremonies at the Unveiling, Hartford, Conn. 1895 1.00

he New London Willimantic & Palmer Railroad Co., a brief history ompiled by Charles G. Woodward, Hartford, Conn., 1941 2.50

ecords of Rev. Ransom Warner, 1823-1854 . . . by Albert C. Bates, Hartford, Conn., 1923 3.00

abbath School Catechism . . . by Rev. Nathan Perkins, Hartford, Conn., 819 .50

eminiscences of Revivals of Religion in the First Church in Hartford . . by J. Hawes, Hartford, Conn., 1865 .50

he Shorter Catechism of the Reverend Assembly of Divines at Westinster, Hartford, Conn., 1841 .50

Program Schedule

1954-1955

October 5, 1954—	Edouard A. Stackpole, Curator, Marine Historical Association, Inc., Mystic. — "CONNECTICUT WHALERS AND WHALING."
November 2, 1954—	Roland Wells Robbins, Concord, Mass., Lecturer and Archaeologist. — "THROUGH THE COVERED BRIDGE TO RURAL NEW ENGLAND," illustrated with colored slides.
December 7, 1954—	A. H. Wilson, Lecturer and Proprietor of Wilder's Genealogical Bookshop, Somerville, Mass. — "WHAT'S IN A NAME?" the story of our family names, what they mean, how we got them.
January 4, 1955—	Loring McMillen, Director, Staten Island Historical Society and nationally known authority on restoration of houses.—"RESTORATION METHODS," illustrated.
February 1, 1955—	Melancthon W. Jacobus, Kingswood School.—"CONNECTICUT RIVER STEAMBOATS."
March 1, 1955—	Brooks Palmer, New York City, noted author and collector.—"CONNECTICUT CLOCKS."
April 5, 1955—	William L. Warren, Litchfield, Writer.—"WILLIAM SPRATS, MASTER JOINER."
May 3, 1955—	"THE COLONIAL PRINTER" and "FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS OF WILLIAMSBURG," sound, color motion pictures produced by Colonial Williamsburg.

OPEN DAILY

Except Sundays and Holidays

The Library	The Museum
9:30 A.M.–5:30 P.M.	1:00–5:00 P.M.

Saturdays 10:00 A.M.–5:00 P.M.

The Building is closed Saturdays at noon during June, July and August.

Telephone ADams 3-2397